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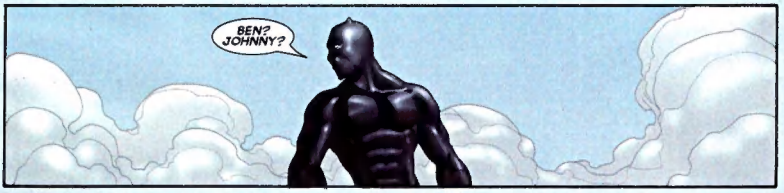
## PREVIOUSLY

Unfettered by the yoke of colonization, the African warrior nation of WAKANDA flourished and became a high-tech, resource-rich, ecologically-sound paradise—one that makes the rest of the world seem primitive in comparison. Ruling over this kingdom are the BLACK PANTHER and his queen, STORM.

At the conclusion of America's super hero civil war, T'Challa and Ororo found themselves in desperate straits: on the losing side of the fray, at odds with Wakanda's ruling council, and without an embassy in the United States. However, their luck seemed to change when Reed Richards and Sue Storm offered the couple residence in the Baxter Building and their places in the Fantastic Four.

Desperate to keep a Negative Zone monster who had invaded the Baxter Building from running loose in New York City, T'Challa took a risk and used the unreliable magic of King Solomon's golden frogs to take the fight elsewhere. While the gamble did pay off and the team was able to extract the bug from the Baxter Building, they ended up somewhere far more perilous: on a Skrull homeworld in an alternate reality, one under attack by some familiar-looking zombies. Eager to evade the jaws of the Zombie Galacti, the Fantastic Four called upon the golden frogs once more, hoping that they would be able to escape the planet before its obliteration...

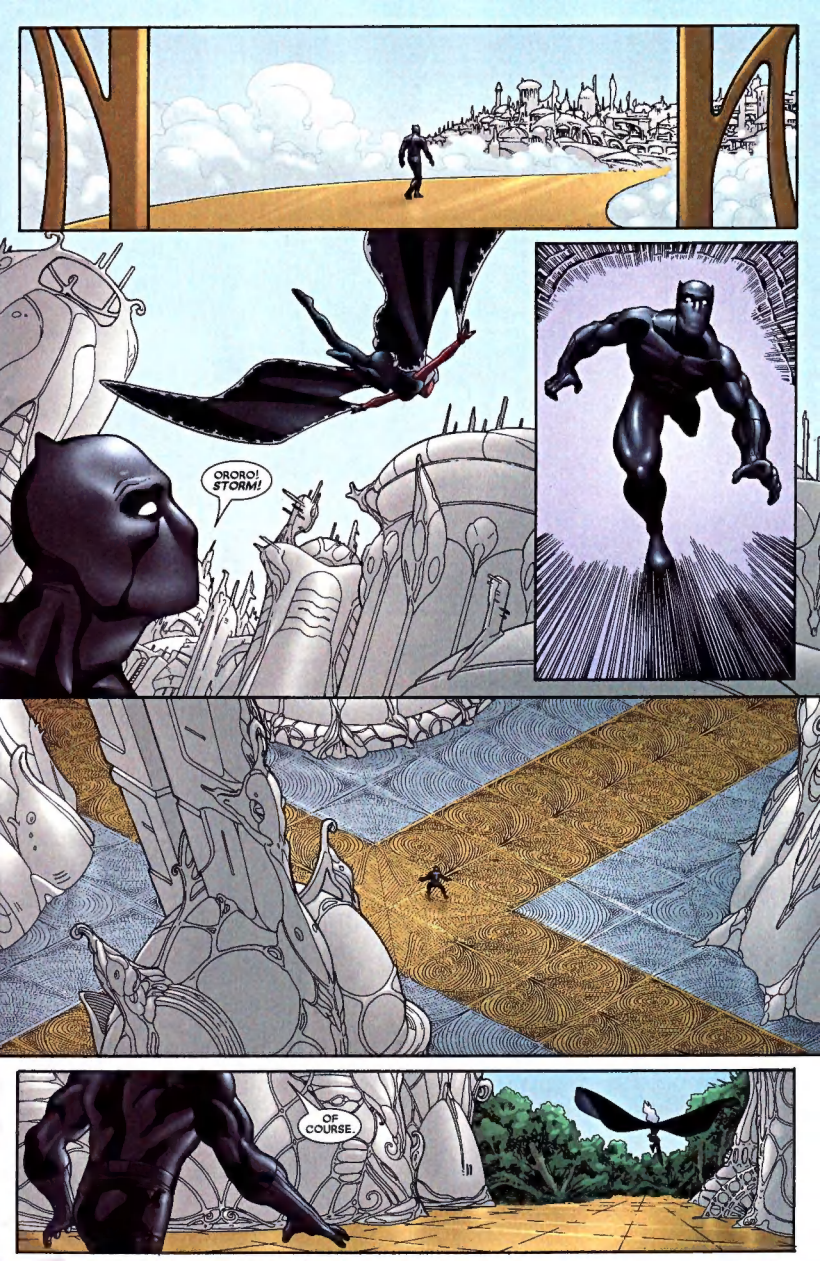
**BLACK PANTHER** (ISSN #1540-0255) **No. 31, December, 2007.** Published Monthly by MARVEL PUBLISHING, INC., a subsidiary of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT, INC. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 417 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10016. **PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, NY AND AT ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES.** © 2007 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. $2.99 per copy in the U.S. and $3.75 in Canada (GST #R127032852) for the direct market and $2.99 per copy in the U.S. and $4.25 in Canada (GST #R127032852) through the newsstand. Canadian Agreement #40868537. Canadian Agreement #40868537. **Printed in the USA.** Subscription rate (U.S. dollars) for 12 issues: U.S. $27.00, Canada $37.00, Foreign $39.00. **POSTMASTER: SEND ALL ADDRESS CHANGES TO BLACK PANTHER, C/O MARVEL SUBSCRIPTION DEPT. P.O. BOX 110 NEWBURGH, NY 12550. TELEPHONE # (800) 217-9158. FAX # (845) 457-5029. subscriptions@marvelsubs.com.** ALAN FINE, CEO Marvel Toys & Publishing Divisions and CMO Marvel Entertainment, Inc.; DAVID GABRIEL, Senior VP of Publishing Sales & Circulation; DAVID BOGART, VP of Business Affairs & Editorial Operations; MICHAEL PASCIULLO, VP Merchandising & Communications; JIM BOYLE, VP of Publishing Operations; DAN CARR, Executive Director of Publishing Technology; JUSTIN F. GABRIE, Managing Editor; SUSAN CRESPI, Production Manager; STAN LEE, Chairman Emeritus. For information regarding advertising in Marvel Comics or on Marvel.com, please contact Jeb Malmoes, Advertising Director, at jmalmoes@marvel.com or 212-576-8534. For Marvel subscription inquiries, please call 800-217-9158.

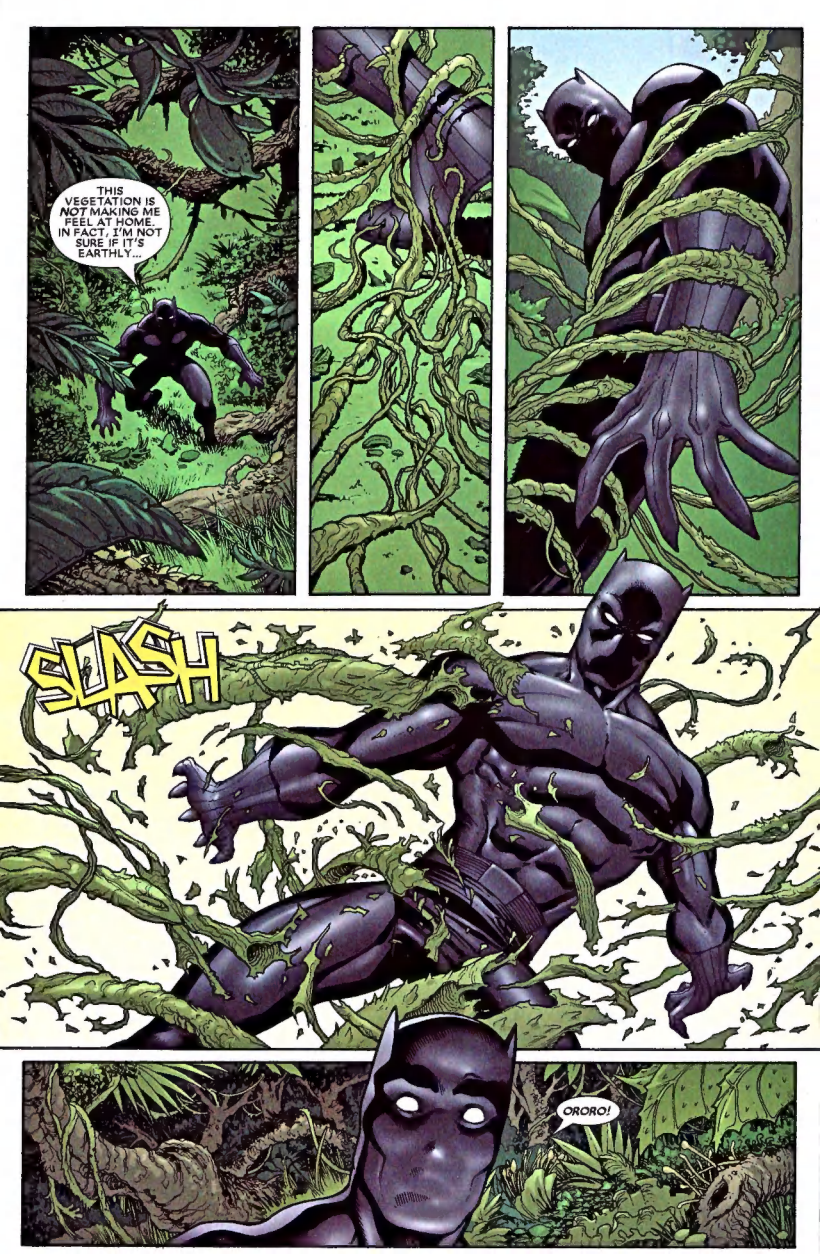


# DEAD OR ALIVE?

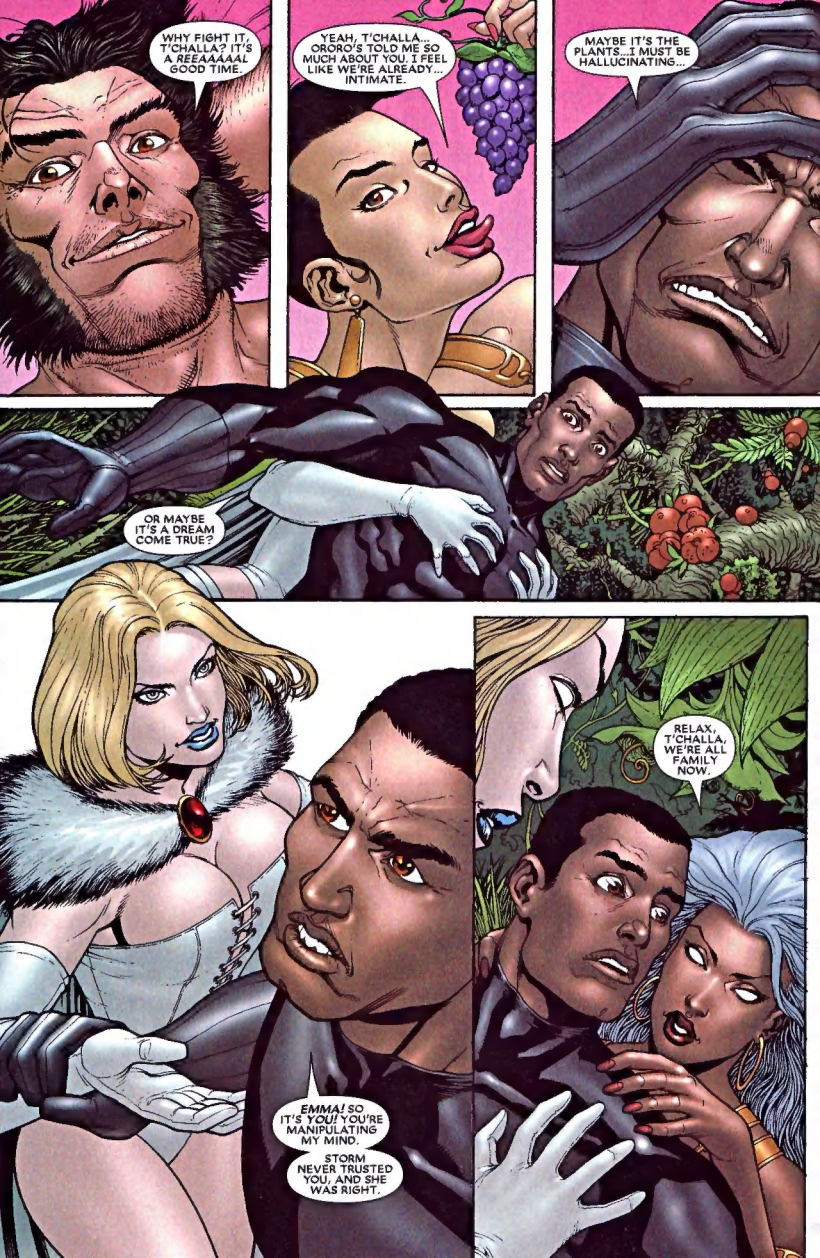
PART 1

| REGINALD HUDLIN | FRANCIS PORTELA | VAL STAPLES | VC'S CORY PETIT | BILLY TAN & FRANK D'ARMATA | DANIEL KETCHUM | AXEL ALONSO | JOE QUESADA | DAN BUCKLEY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| WRITER | PENCILS & INKS | COLORS | LETTERS | COVER | ASSISTANT EDITOR | EDITOR | EDITOR IN CHIEF | PUBLISHER |


ORORO! STORM!
OF COURSE.

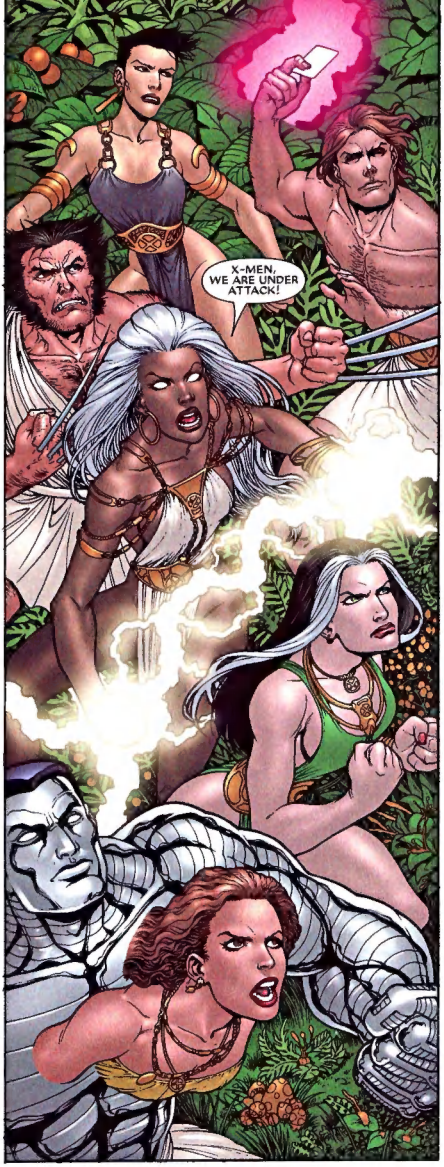

THIS VEGETATION IS NOT MAKING ME FEEL AT HOME. IN FACT, I'M NOT SURE IF IT'S EARTHLY...
SLASH
ORORO!

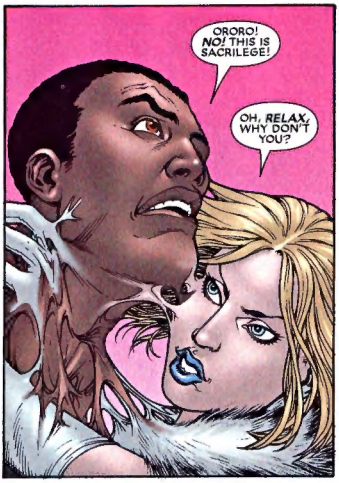
OH, T'CHALLA! WELCOME!
"WELCOME"? WHAT ARE YOU *TALKING* ABOUT? WHAT *IS* THIS?
WE'RE THE *X-MEN*, DARLING. DID YOU THINK ALL OF THOSE POWERS WERE JUST FOR BEATING UP BAD GUYS?


WHY FIGHT IT, T'CHALLA? IT'S A REEAAAAAL GOOD TIME.
YEAH, T'CHALLA... ORORO'S TOLD ME SO MUCH ABOUT YOU. I FEEL LIKE WE'RE ALREADY... INTIMATE.
MAYBE IT'S THE PLANTS...I MUST BE HALLUCINATING...
OR MAYBE IT'S A DREAM COME TRUE?
RELAX, T'CHALLA, WE'RE ALL FAMILY NOW.
EMMA! SO IT'S YOU! YOU'RE MANIPULATING MY MIND.
STORM NEVER TRUSTED YOU, AND SHE WAS RIGHT.

-MPF!-
NO! I'M...
MARRIED...
ROOOAAAR!

WHAT *IS* THIS MADNESS?!


X-MEN, WE ARE UNDER ATTACK!


ORORO! NO! THIS IS SACRILEGE!
OH, RELAX, WHY DON'T YOU?

NOW LOOK HERE. NO DISRESPECT, BUT WE'VE FACED OUR FAIR SHARE OF GODS AND CELESTIAL BEINGS BEFORE, SO BEFORE YOU START JUDGING--

YOU HAVE BROKEN A SACRED VOW TO ME. THE PENALTY IS *DEATH.*
IF YOU THINK--
ORORO!!!
T'CHALLA, I--*HMPH!*
FIRST YOU KISS MY WOMAN-- THEN MANHANDLE HER?!
SPLUNCH
SHUT UP!

NICE ONE. ALWAYS WANTED TO DO THAT.
TOO BAD FOR YOU, HE'S AN X-MAN-- AND YOU'RE NOT. AND WE ALWAYS TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN.
SNkT
THIS--
--IS--
WHAK
--INSANE!
WHOOM

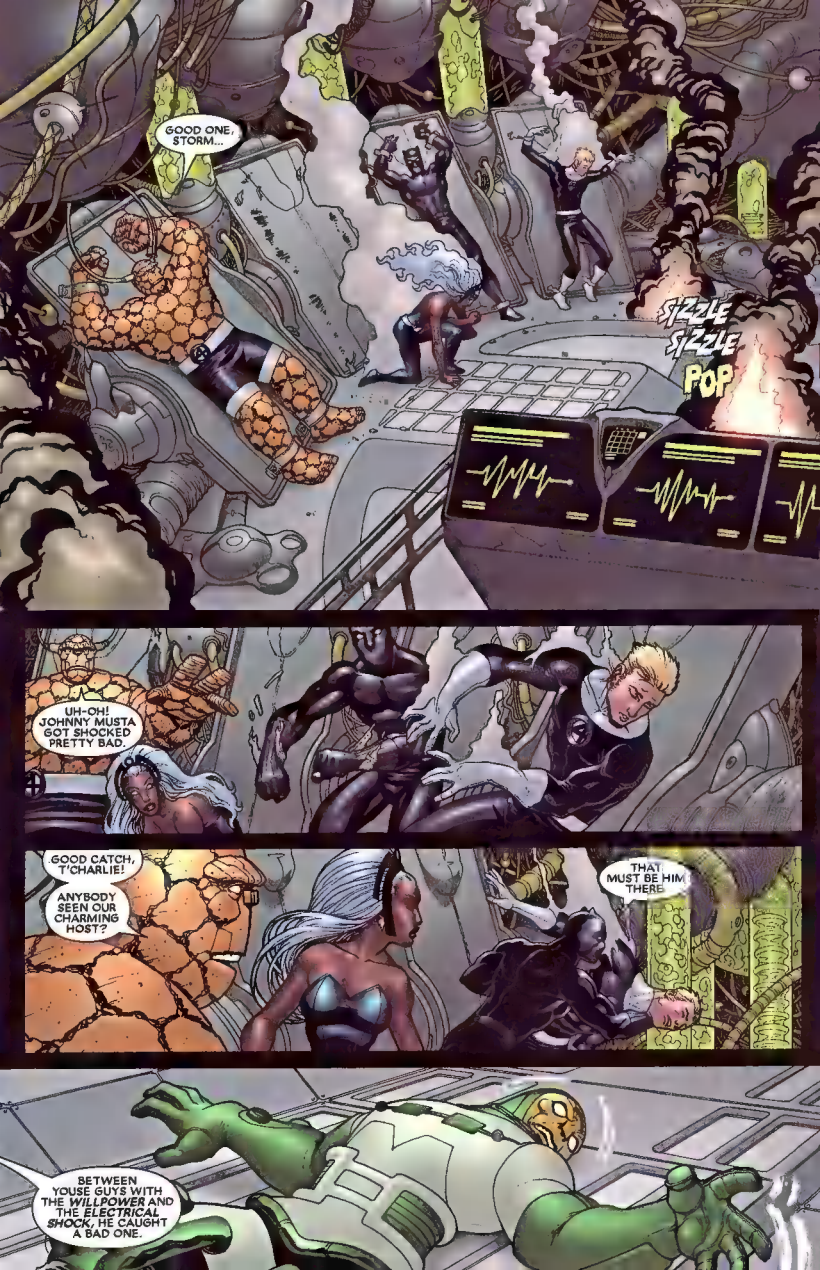
AFTER YOU DEFEAT THESE FOOLS, YOU STILL MUST FACE MY JUDGMENT.
NO, THIS REALLY DOESN'T MAKE SENSE.
THIS IS NOT REAL.
NOT--
SO IT WASN'T REAL.
BUT WHAT IS?

I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU ARE SO RESISTANT TO MY EMOTIONAL SUGGESTION.
PERHAPS YOUR COLLEAGUES IN THE X-MEN HAVE PLACED SOME FORMIDABLE MENTAL SAFEGUARDS AGAINST SUCH ACTION.
LET'S TAKE A PEEK INSIDE AND SEE WHAT'S *REALLY* GOING ON.
ZZZZZ
ZZZZZ
YES, FRUSTRATING, ISN'T IT? I CAN DISABLE YOUR ABILITY TO ACCESS YOUR MUTANT POWER, BUT CAN'T CONVINCE YOU THAT THE PANTHER IS YOUR ENEMY.
WHAT THE--?
KRAKOOM
THAT'S BECAUSE YOU CANNOT REND WHAT THE *PANTHER GOD* HAS BLESSED!

NOW YOU, YOU I CAN CONTROL.
INTRODUCING DOUBT INTO YOUR PSYCHE IS ENOUGH TO UNDERMINE YOUR FIGHTING ABILITY.
WHAM
NOW, WHILE YOU WALLOW IN INSECURITY, I WILL FINISH DISSECTING YOUR WIFE.
LEAVE MY DAUGHTER-IN-LAW ALONE!
T'CHAKA?
ORORO.
AREN'T YOU DEAD?
NO...

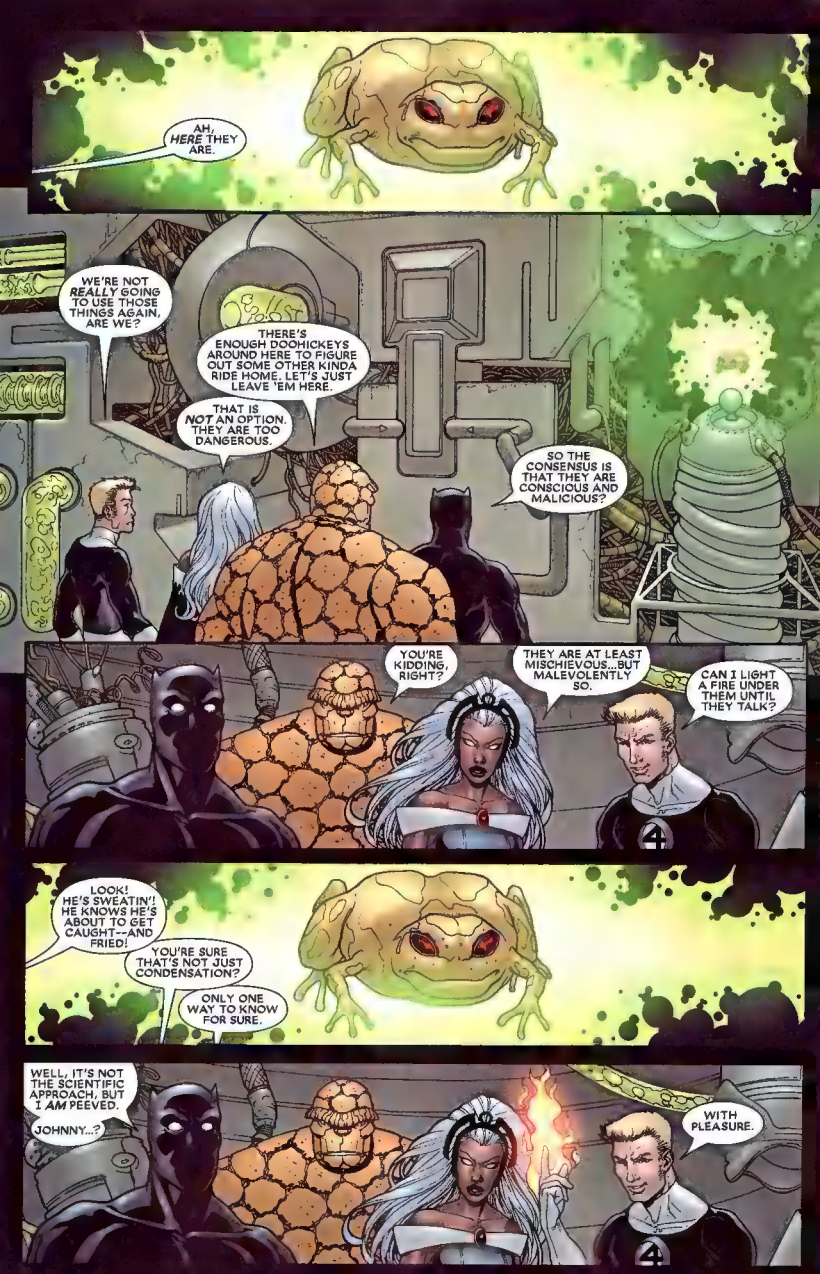
HE IS.
URRGK!
AMANDLA!!!
SON, ARE YOU OKAY?
LET ME FREE YOU FROM THOSE BONDS.
DEAD YET?
WHO ARE YOU...?
YOU DIDN'T THINK ALL THE BLACK PANTHERS WERE MALE, DID YOU? IF THERE WERE FEMALE POPES, YOU BETTER BELIEVE A NATION AS PROGRESSIVE AS WAKANDA HAD--
WAIT! SOMETHING'S WRONG.
MY POWERS... I STILL CAN'T ACCESS THEM.
YES...MY FINAL GIFT TO YOU...ORORO...IS MERE HUMANITY. YOUR POWERS
PSYCHO-MAN?
I THINK HE DID GET AWAY FROM US. HE STINKS OF DEATH.

NO... NO...
FEAR NOT, DAUGHTER. WE WILL RECONNECT YOU TO YOUR ESSENCE...
MAYBE XAVIER--EVEN EMMA--MAYBE THEY CAN HELP...
EVEN IF THEY CAN'T, YOU CAN TAKE PANTHER-TRAINING...
PLEASE...ONLY ONE PANTHER PER GENERATION...
WHY?
PLEASE... YOU'RE CROWDING ME....
FATHER?
YES, SON?
I DON'T BELIEVE THIS EITHER.
I CAN FIX THIS...I JUST NEED TO BE LEFT ALONE!


GOOD ONE, STORM...
SIZZLE
SIZZLE
POP
UH-OH! JOHNNY MUSTA GOT SHOCKED PRETTY BAD.
GOOD CATCH, T'CHARLIE!
ANYBODY SEEN OUR CHARMING HOST?
THAT MUST BE HIM THERE
BETWEEN YOUSE GUYS WITH THE *WILLPOWER* AND THE *ELECTRICAL SHOCK*, HE CAUGHT A BAD ONE.

IN MY DREAM, PSYCHO-MAN BROUGHT MY WORST ANXIETIES ABOUT OUR RELATIONSHIP TO LIFE.
I KNOW. ME TOO. BUT HE WAS NOT ABLE TO TURN US AGAINST EACH OTHER, AND WE BOTH ULTIMATELY REJECTED HIS INSTIGATIONS.
I LOVE YOU.
I LOVE YOU.
BUT LATER WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT YOUR RELATIVES.
SAME HERE, BUT REGARDING YOUR ASSOCIATION WITH THE---
UH, GUYS? MAN DOWN HERE.

SORRY, BEN, I...
NO NEED TO EXPLAIN. I BEEN THERE A TIME OR TWO. AFTER PSYCHO-MAN MESSES WITH YER HEAD, YOU END UP IN FAMILY THERAPY EVEN AFTER YOU KICK HIS BUTT.
HOW IS HE?
CONSIDERING A NORMAL MAN WOULD BE DEAD, HE'S VERY GOOD.
I'M SURE THE ABILITY TO TRANSMUTE INTO LIVING FLAME HELPS IN SITUATIONS LIKE THIS.
DO THOSE INSULATED LONG JOHNS CHAFE IN THE SUMMER?
I CAN MAKE A PAIR OF SHOCKPROOF HOT PANTS FOR YOU IF YOU WANT.
NOW MR. TACITURN IS MAKING JOKES. WE'RE RUBBING OFF ON HIM.
BUT WHAT ABOUT WHERE WE ARE? IS THIS REALITY? OR ANOTHER DREAM WITHIN A DREAM?
YES, AND IF IT IS REAL--ARE WE IN OUR WORLD? OR ARE WE IN THE SUBATOMICA OF A PARALEL UNIVERSE?
NOT TO MENTION--
WHERE ARE THOSE BLASTED FROGS?
OH MAN...I JUST HAD THE CREEPIEST DREAMS. I THINK THE ZOMBIE PARTS WERE REAL, THOUGH...


AH, HERE THEY ARE.
WE'RE NOT REALLY GOING TO USE THOSE THINGS AGAIN, ARE WE?
THERE'S ENOUGH DOOHICKEYS AROUND HERE TO FIGURE OUT SOME OTHER KINDA RIDE HOME. LET'S JUST LEAVE 'EM HERE.
THAT IS NOT AN OPTION. THEY ARE TOO DANGEROUS.
SO THE CONSENSUS IS THAT THEY ARE CONSCIOUS AND MALICIOUS?
YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT?
THEY ARE AT LEAST MISCHIEVOUS...BUT MALEVOLENTLY SO.
CAN I LIGHT A FIRE UNDER THEM UNTIL THEY TALK?
LOOK! HE'S SWEATIN'! HE KNOWS HE'S ABOUT TO GET CAUGHT--AND FRIED!
YOU'RE SURE THAT'S NOT JUST CONDENSATION?
ONLY ONE WAY TO KNOW FOR SURE.
WELL, IT'S NOT THE SCIENTIFIC APPROACH, BUT I AM PEEVED.
JOHNNY...?
WITH PLEASURE.

HE DID IT AGAIN! ON HIS OWN!
KELLY
YEAH, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE I SCARED IT INTO COOPERATING. LOOKS LIKE WE'RE FINALLY HOME.
THEN AGAIN...
FREEZE!

WHADDA WE GOT HERE? SOME OUT-OF-TOWNERS ON MY TURF?
YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING ME...
YOU RECOGNIZE THIS MAN?
WORSE THAN THAT...
I THOUGHT I RECOGNIZED YOU, BIG UGLY. THERE'S BIG MONEY ON YOUR HEAD. YOU...AND THE CAT MAN.
SPRAY 'EM, BOYS.
BZZAAPT
BZZAAPT
BZZAAPT

NEXT: FIGHT OR DIE

TEAM
DCP
A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH
TAFT AND DELBOY